

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 104074 TOSEC 110389

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 104074 TOSEC 110389

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAPE TOWN 0492 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BONN
DAR ES SALAAM DURBAN GABORONE JOHANNESBURG LILONGWE LONDON
LUSAKA MAPUTO PARIS PRETORIA 29 APR

QUOTE

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0492

DEPT PLEASE PASS TO SENATOR PERCY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: RF, SF, PFOR, PINT, PINS, MILI

SUBJ: VORSTER COMMENTS ON RHODESIA

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY HAS JUST RECEIVED ADVANCE HANSARD TEXT
OF PM VORSTER'S APRIL 22 PARLIAMENTARY STATEMENT REGARDING
SAME DAY'S LONDON TIMES REPORT THAT SAG HAD DECIDED TO SEND
NO FURTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE--NEITHER TROOPS NOR EQUIPMENT-
TO RHODESIA AND THAT THIS DECISION HAD PROMPTED VISIT OF
RHODESIAN DEFENSE MINISTER VAN DER BIJL TO SOUTH AFRICA LAST
MONTH FOR HIGH-LEVEL MEETING. VORSTER DID NOT DEAL WITH
SPECIFICS OF TIMES ARTICLE INCLUDING REPORT THAT 34 S.A.
HELICOPTERS ON LOAN TO RHODESIA ARE NOT RPT NOT TO BE WITHDRAWN.
HE SIMPLY SAID THAT DECISION REPORTE IN TIMES HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN
NOR HAD REPORTED MEETING WITH VAN DER BIJL TAKEN PLACE. IN SAME
SPEECH PM WARNED KAUNDA AND OTHERS TO MODERATE RHETORIC AND
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PAGE 02 STATE 104074 TOSEC 110389

ACTIONS AND CALLED UPON BRITAIN TO RECOGNIZE ITS SPECIAL

OBLIGATIONS (NOT FURTHER DEFINED) TO RHODESIA.
WHILE IN SOUTH AFRICA, SENATOR PERCY EXPRESSED INTEREST
IN VIEWING TEXT OF VORSTER'S REMARKS. END SUMMARY.

2. INTERESTINGLY RHODESIA HERALD FRONT PAGED VORSTER'S
COMMENTS WITH HEADLINE THAT "S.A. 'WILL NOT DENY SUPPORT
TO RHODESIA'". USE OF QUOTATION MARKS ATTRIBUTES WORDS
TO VORSTER WHICH HE DID NOT UTTER AND CONVERS, FOR RHODESIAN
CONSUMPTION, SAG'S CONTINUING UNWILLINGNESS TO STATE PUBLICLY
ITS POSITION ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO RHODESIA INTO A RINGING
STATEMENT OF SUPPORT.

3. FOLLOWING IS FULLTEXT OF PM'S COMMENTS ON LONDON TIMES
ARTICLE:

"UNFORTUNATELY, HOWEVER, REPORTS ARE FREQUENTLY PUBLISHED
WHICH ARE ENTIRELY FABRICATED OR BASED ENTIRELY ON SPECULA-
TION, AND THEN PUT OUT AS FEELERS. SUBSEQUENTLY ONE IS
CONTINUALLY AXKED FOR ONE'S COMMENT ON SUCH REPORTS.
CONSEQUENTLY IT DOES NOT MATTER WHAT COMMENT ONE MAKES ON
THEM. THE REPORTS ARE USUALLY OF SUCH A NATURE THAT ONE'S
COMMENTS CAN ONLY CAUSE FURTHER DAMAGE.

SUCH A REPORT APPEARED THIS MORNING ON THE FRONT PACE
OF THE LONDON TIMES. THE REPORT DEALT WITH CERTAIN
MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH SOUTH AFRICA HAD SUPPOSEDLY
RENDERED TO RHODESIA IN THE PAST, ACCORDINGLO THIS
REPORT, ASSISTANCE WHICH SOUTH AFRICA HAD ALLEGEDLY
CANCELLED AT A MEETING LAST MONTH, SOMETHING WHICH LED
INTER ALIA--THIS IS THE INFERENCE--TO A MEETING WITH
MINISTER P.K. VAN DER BIJL OF RHODESIA. I AM NOT GOING TO
MAKE ANY COMMENT WHATSOEVER ON WHAT WE ARE GIVING OR ARE
NOT GIVING, HAD ALLEGEDLY GIVEN OR HAD NOT GIVEN, TO
RHODESIA. I SHALL LEAVE IT AT THAT. BUT I DO WANT TO
MAKE IT VERY CLEAR THAT NO SUCH DECISION, SUCH AS THE
ONE REFERRED TO IN THE SAID REPORT, WAS TAKEN. NOR DID
ANY SUCH MEETING TAKE PLACE. WHILE PARLIAMENT WAS IN
SESSION MR. VAN DER BIJL WAS HERE IN SOUTH AFRICA, BUT HE
WAS UP IN THE NORTH AND NO TALKS WHATSOEVER WERE HELD WITH
HIM BY ANY MEMBER OF THE GOVERNMENT OR ANY OTHER PERSON
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 104074 TOSEC 110389

IN A POSITION OF AUTHORITY. CONSIDERING THE WIDE FIELD
OF INFLUENCE OF THE REPORT, I FELT THAT I SHOULD FURNISH
THIS EXPLANATION."

4. IN SAME SPEECH VORSTER APPEALED TO LEADERS OF SOUTHERN
AFRICA, PARTICULARLY PRESIDENT OF ZAMBIA "WHO TALK VERY
EASILY OF WAR, IN MANY CASES KNOWING FULL WELL THAT THEY
CANNOT AFFORD IT ECONOMICALLY AND OTHERWISE" TO MODERATE

THEIR RHETORIC AND "TO REFRAIN FROM DRAWING THE BOW TOO TAUT".

5. VORSTER THEN SAID,

"I MUST ISSUE A SERIOUS WARNING, SIR, AND I WANT TO TRUST THAT LEADERS, IN SOUTHERN AFRICA AND ELSEWHERE, WILL TAKE COGNISANCE OF THIS. THE KILLING OF INNOCENT MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN IS NOT ONLY BARBARIC AND DETESTABLE; IT CAN ULTIMATELY BE DANGEROUS FOR THE PERPETRATORS AS WELL AS FOR THEIR INCITERS. WHETHER THEY ARE TOURISTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA OR OTHER TOURISTS, OR WHETHER THEY ARE INHABITANTS, BLACK OR WHITE, OF RHODESIA OR OF ANY OTHER COUNTRY, SUCH DEEDS CAN ONLY UNLEASH FORCES WHICH COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES. THEY COULD AROUSE UNBRIDLED EMOTIONS. THEY COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING CONSEQUENCES FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA. I WANT TO TRUST THAT PEOPLE WHO HAVE CONTROL OVER THIS KIND OF THING WILL CONSIDER, AND CONSIDER VERY EARNESTLY, WHAT THE EFFECT OF THIS COULD BE ON THE SOUTHERNMOST POINT OF THE CONTINENT OF AFRICA."

6. PRIME MINISTER ALSO REPEATED WELL-KNOWN POSITION THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS NEVER BEEN INVOLVED IN RHODESIA'S INTERNAL DISPUTE AND THAT "WE HAVE NEVER PRESCRIBED TO ANYONE, THAT WE HAVE NEVER TRIED TO TWIST ANYONE'S ARM AND THAT WE HAVE NEVER GIVEN ORDERS". TAKING NOTE OF APPEALS TO HIM IN CERTAIN BRITISH NEWSPAPERS TO ACT DECISIVELY ON RHODESIA, VORSTER STATED APPEALS SHOULD BE MADE INSTEAD TO BRITISH GOVERNMENT. HE SAID,

"THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT HAS ALWAYS ADOPTED THE ATTITUDE THAT IT HAS CERTAIN RIGHTS IN RHODESIA. WITHOUT ARGUING THE QUESTION OF WHETHER OR NOT THIS IS TRUE, I JUST WANT TO SAY THAT IF ITS PREMISE IS THAT RHODESIA IS ITS TERRITORY AND THE RHODESIANS LIVING THERE ITS SUBJECTS, THEN I BELIEVE THAT THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS UNDER A

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PAGE 04 STATE 104074 TOSEC 110389

SPECIAL OBLIGATION IN THAT REGARD. THEN IT IS NOT ONLY THE NEIGHBOURING STATES THAT ARE UNDER OBLIGATIONS, THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT IS ALSO UNDER A SPECIAL OBLIGATION AS FAR AS THAT MATTER IS CONCERNED."

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